second passivation layer having a thickness that is less than a thickness of the first passivation layer;

selectively removing the second passivation layer via a first etching process, the first etching process being terminated when the second passivation layer is completely removed;

etching the wafer via the second etching process; and

removing the first passivation layer.

**REMARKS**

Claims 14-24 are currently pending in the present application. Applicants have amended claim 14 for purposes of clarity. This amendment is clearly supported by the Specification, for example, on page 3, lines 28-31, which recite that the second passivation layer "can be removed completely selectively with respect to the remaining oxide layer in subregion 40 if the etching process with the hydrofluoric acid etchant medium is terminated as soon as thin oxide layer 41 is removed." Accordingly, it is kindly requested that the amendment to claim 14 be entered, since the amendment raises no new issues and puts the pending claims in condition for allowance and/or in better form for appeal. Applicants kindly request reconsideration of the present application for the following reasons.

Claims 10 and 21-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,711,891 to Pearce ("Pearce"); claims 14-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over the combination of U.S. Patent No. 5,738,757 to Burns et al. ("Burns") and U.S. Patent No. 6,033,997 to Perng ("Perng"); and claims 14-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Pearce.

As amended herein, claim 14 recites the following:

> 14. (Amended) A method of etching a wafer, comprising the steps of:
> providing a wafer having a surface and edge